WRITTEN ANSWERS TO UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

Import of palm oil

1853. SHRI RAVULA CHANDRA SEKAR REDDY:
SHRI RUMANDLA RAAMACHANDRAYYA:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether India is still dependent on imported palm oil due to huge deficiency in domestic oil seeds production; and

(b) it so, the measures proposed to reduce dependence on imported palm oil and to bring import bill under check?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV): (a) and (b) Information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Less income from Bt cotton for farmers

†1854. SHRI RAJIV RANJAN SINGH 'LALAN':
SHRI KAPIL SIBAL:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that income of the farmers growing Bt Cotton in Andhra Pradesh had been five times less during 2002 as compared to those who had grown normal cotton;

(b) if not, the fact in this regard;

(c) whether Government have collected any information regarding production of BT Cotton in other States of the country; and

(d) if so, the names of the States where Bt Cotton was grown during 2002, 2003 and per hectare net profit earned by the growers from it?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV): (a) to (c) The Central Institute

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

for Cotton Research, Nagpur has found, *inter-alia*, that Bt. cotton hybrids generally registered reduction in 2-6 sprays across the States with yield advantage of 2—4 Qtls. per hectare. Information received from the Government of Andhra Pradesh indicated, however, that net returns from Bt. cotton were less compared to non-Bt. cotton in some regions due to higher cost of cultivation, lower yield potential compared to popular indigenous hybrids, short staple length sensitivity to adverse weather conditions etc.

(d) The Genetic Engineering Approval Committee (GEAC) had accorded conditional approval in April, 2002 for the environmental release of three Bt. cotton hybrids in the State of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu for a period of three years. The widespread prevalence of drought during 2002-03 caused unusually low incidence of bollworms, thereby reducing the advantage of Bt. cotton. An evaluation of the performance of Bt. cotton during Kharif 2002 indicates that by and large the farmers who followed the recommended agronomic practices realized higher profits. The area under Bt. cotton has accordingly increased by about three fold during Kharif 2003.

National Policy on pesticides

1855. SHRI RAMA MUNI REDDY SIRIGIREDDY:
SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are thinking of formulating a National Policy on Pesticides in the light of the increasing dangers to human health from food, drinking water etc.;

(b) whether the eminent agriculture scientists Dr. M.S. Swaminathan has also called for a National Policy on pesticides; and

(c) if so, the reaction of Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV): (a) There is already a National